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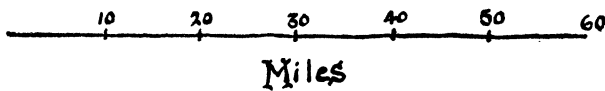
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X.—PATRONS OF LETTERS IN NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK, c. 1450

I

The ordinary condition of the mediaeval poet or man of letters who was not connected with the court, but sought patronage among the country gentry or the citizens of provincial towns, was one of more or less complete isolation. If he found a patron he was fortunate, and when he had supplied that patron's needs, or had carried to a conclusion the work upon which he had, by his patron's interest and support, been encouraged to engage, he had little incentive to further literary production unless he could find new patronage. It is perhaps a result of this condition that so many books of the Middle Ages are the work of men who wrote but one book, and that one with the painful care of the amateur, rather than the sure skill of the trained writer. In the majority of cases, or at least in the most typical cases (since generalisations of this kind can be at the best only rough approximations), the provincial writer worked for a single patron, and his "public" consisted of his patron's family and intimates.

It occasionally happened, however, that in a prosperous and unified country district a number of persons, closely connected by ties of acquaintance and interest, were patronising literature at about the same time, causing books to be written and rewarding writers who composed books for their benefit. It is obvious that such a condition must have been very favourable to literary production, first, because the number of possible readers of a new book was increased by its chance of passing from the hands of the



patron for whom it was written into those of friends who would cause it to be copied, and secondly because writers were encouraged to seek new patronage, or to undertake works which they would not have attempted had they lived in a community where but one person was known to be interested in the writing of books, and he already furnished with a writer capable of giving him what he needed or liked. Moreover, among patrons who were mutually well known to each other, the spirit of emulation could scarcely fail to be a stimulus to activity in the work of patronising letters.

The condition I have defined is not an imaginary or hypothetical one, but actually existed about the middle of the fifteenth century in East Anglia.¹ It is the purpose of the present article to take note of the persons who were patronising literature in Norfolk and Suffolk during the period from 1420 to 1460, and to show how intimately connected these patrons were by ties of kinship, neighbourhood, and common interests. I shall begin with the Paston family.²

¹ Norfolk and Suffolk, tho nominally two counties, were practically but one. They were (for many purposes, at least) an administrative and financial unit, and were presided over by a single sheriff.

² It is, I confess, with some regret that I have been forced to exclude Thomas Chaucer from the number of East Anglian patrons of letters. That he was a patron of Lydgate we know from the "Balade made by Lydegate at þe departyng of Thomas Chaucyer on ambassade in to ffraunce" and the "Amerous balade by Lydegate made at þe departing of Thomas Chauciens on þe kynges ambassade into ffraunce" which are preserved in the two Shirley mss. Addit. 16165 and Ashmole 59. Both of these texts are printed by Furnivall in *Notes and Queries*, S. 4. IX, pp. 381 ff., and the former of them is printed by Miss Hammond in *Modern Philology*, I, pp. 333 ff. In the former poem, Lydgate, after a prayer for Chaucer's preservation on the sea and safe return, praises the generous hospitality

The seat of this family was at Paston, near the coast of northern Norfolk. By the death of Clement Paston,

that his patron practices at home. Then, in stanza 7, he addresses a friend of Chaucer's:

And gentyl *Molyns* myn owen lord so der
 Lytel merveyle þoughe þow sighe and pleyne
 Now to forgone þin owen pleying feere
 I wot right wel hit is to þe gret peyne
 But haue good hope soone for to atteyne
 þin hertis blisse agayne and þat right sone
 Or foure tymes eschaunged be þe Mone.

(Hammond, *l. c.*, p. 335.)

Stanza 8 is addressed to Chaucer's wife; in the ninth and tenth stanzas he turns again to Chaucer's neighbours and says:

Ye gentilmen dwelling envyroun

 Saythe every day deuotely þis memoyre
 Saynt Iulyan oure Ioye and al oure gloyre
 Come hoome ageyne lyche as we desyre
 To suppowaylen al þe hole shyre.

Was the shire in which Chaucer and his friends lived Norfolk? It is true that Chaucer, at the date of this poem (1417) owned a moiety of the manor of Gresham, in northern Norfolk, which he had acquired by his marriage to Matilda, daughter of Sir John Burghersh. The manor was formerly the possession of Edmund Bacon and descended from him to his two daughters, Margaret and Margery. Margaret's share of the manor descended to her granddaughter Matilda Burghersh. Margery's share passed to her husband, Sir William Moleyns (or Molyne). It is this common association of Thomas Chaucer and Moleyns with the manor of Gresham that caused Miss Hammond to infer that Lydgate's poem refers to Norfolk. "It will appear likely," she says (*l. c.*, pp. 332, 333), ". . . from the family connection just sketched, that a son of the house of Molyne was a very natural inmate of the home of Thomas Chaucer, and that the manor of Gresham, as the place of common interest to both Molyne and Chaucer, is probably meant here." This opinion was accepted by Dr. H. N. MacCracken, who says (*Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xxvi, pp. 146, 147): "She [the Countess of Suffolk] was the daughter of Thomas Chaucer, whose family's interest in letters is attested by Lydgate's *Complaint on Departing of Thomas Chaucer*, and whose house, ac-

in June, 1419, his son William Paston (1378-1444) became the head of the family, and was married about a

cording to Lydgate, was the center of the social life of the county of Suffolk." On closer consideration, however, it seems likely that the country to which Lydgate refers was in the neighbourhood of Thomas Chaucer's Oxfordshire residence, Ewelme. It is a well known fact that Chaucer's chief associations were with Oxfordshire. He sat for that county in Parliament in 1400-1, 1402, 1405-6, 1407, 1409-10, 1411, 1413, 1414, 1421, 1422, 1425-6, 1427, 1429, 1430-1 (*D. N. B.*, x, p. 167). He was appointed on the commission of the peace for that county in 1403, 1404, 1406, 1407, 1410, 1412, 1413, 1423, 1424, 1432 (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1401-5, p. 519; 1405-8, p. 496; 1408-13, p. 484; 1413-16, p. 422; 1422-9, p. 568; 1429-36, p. 623). His apparent absence from the commission between 1413 and 1423 is due perhaps to the fact that the patent rolls for five or six years previous to 1422 are not yet calendared. He also appears constantly in connection with other business relating to Oxfordshire and the neighbouring counties of Berks, Bucks, and Herts (*e. g.*, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1401-5, p. 356; 1408-13, pp. 172, 222; 1413-16, pp. 178, 408; 1429-36, pp. 70, 72, 75, 81, 127, 218, 354). He was never on the commission of the peace for Norfolk or Suffolk, however, nor does he appear to have served in either of those counties on such commissions as he was so frequently charged with in relation to the business of Oxfordshire and its vicinity. It seems clear, then, that Chaucer was an Oxfordshire man, and that he had little connection with Norfolk and Suffolk. Lydgate's reference to Moleyns, tho it may at first sight point to Norfolk, in reality confirms this view. This gentleman was (if we are correct in identifying him with the great-grandson of Edmund Bacon) William Moleyns of Stoke Pogis, Buckinghamshire, who died in 1425, aged 48 years (see *Complete Peerage*, L. 1892, iv, pp. 276, 277; Lipscomb's *Buckinghamshire*, iv, pp. 544 ff.). He had many estates in Buckinghamshire, particularly in the neighbourhood of Stoke Pogis and Aylesbury, but was not in possession of that moiety of the manor of Gresham which had been the property of his grandmother. When we consider that Stoke Pogis is only about 21 miles distant from Ewelme, and that Moleyns owned a manor at Henley, Oxf., about 10 miles from Ewelme, it seems almost certain that Lydgate's reference is to Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire rather than to Norfolk and Suffolk. To the references given in this note I may add: *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner, I, pp. xxx, 75, 76, etc.; Nicolas, in *Aldine Chaucer*, L. 1893, I, pp. 86 ff.; *D. N. B.*, xxviii, pp. 256; Blomefield's *Norfolk*, viii, p. 127; *Calendarium Inquisitionum Post Mortem*, iv, p. 199.

year later to Agnes, daughter of Sir Edmund Berry of Harlingbury Hall, Hertfordshire.¹ This marriage was the occasion, if we accept the theory proposed a few years ago by Dr. H. N. MacCracken, of the writing of Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*. This theory, as Dr. MacCracken frankly admits, cannot be considered as proved, but there is strong support for it in the fact that the motto borne by the lady in the poem, as described in the lines:

Therefore hir woord wipoute variaunce
 Enbrouded was, as men myȝt[e] se:
 'De mieulx en mieulx,' with stones and perre:
 This [is] to sein þat she, þis benigne,
 From bettir to bettir hir hert[e] doþ resigne,
 And al hir wil, to Venus þe goddes,
 Whan þat hir list hir harmes to redresse,²

is the motto of the Pastons. There are certain considerations, however, which compel us to caution in this matter. The most important of these is that we do not know at what date the Pastons adopted the motto "De mieux en mieux," for the earliest use of it cited by Dr. MacCracken is by Sir William Paston who died in 1608.³ If the motto was used by the Pastons as early as the fifteenth century we ought, in view of the abundance of material at our disposal, to be able to prove the fact. Moreover, if this was Judge William Paston's motto, why does it appear as a decoration on his lady's garments during the wooing, before the betrothal?⁴ Tempting as Dr. Mac-

¹ *Paston Letters*, I, pp. xxii, 11, *D. N. B.* XLIV, pp. 5 ff.

² *Temple of Glass*, ed. Schick, II. 308-314.

³ *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XXIII, p. 134.

⁴ Dr. MacCracken (*ibid.*, pp. 138, 139) anticipates this objection, but not convincingly. For a lady to wear the motto of her lover before betrothal is somewhat different from a wife's wearing her husband's arms after marriage. Dr. MacCracken concludes with saying: "Of

Cracken's hypothesis is, our information is as yet so imperfect that we can neither accept nor reject the solution he offers us.

If further investigation should be unable to prove William Paston's connection with the *Temple of Glass*, there is no other member of the family whom we can with any confidence assert to have been a patron of letters. Sir John Paston (1442-1479) was an enthusiastic book collector,¹ and *may* have been a patron also. But in the absence of evidence we must refrain from stating more than the mere possibility that, with his very genuine love of literature and his readiness to spend money for the gratification of his taste, he did not confine himself to buying books, but may have, on occasion, caused one to be written for his special benefit.²

At a distance of about fifteen miles from Paston was Caister, one of the residences of Sir John Fastolf (1378?-1459). He had houses also at Yarmouth and Norwich.³ It would be superfluous to show in detail the closeness of Fastolf's relations with the Pastons, for it is well known that they were (in Fastolf's words) "cousins" and that he bequeathed to John Paston (1421-1466) all of his

course, it cannot be proved that Agnes Barry did not bring this motto with her into the family." If this could be substantiated it would furnish the most satisfactory way out of the difficulty.

¹ The Paston letters contain abundant evidence of Sir John's bookishness and most of the passages are well known. See letters 568, 596, 632, 690, 746, 747, 749, 869.

² We may note, before leaving Sir John, letter 794, from one John Pympe to Sir John Paston, dated 1477. It consists of five stanzas in rime royal, with a postscript in prose. Apparently John Pympe was an author, but I have no knowledge of him except this letter. Was Sir John his patron?

³ *D. N. B.*, xviii, pp. 235, 237. Fastolf took up his permanent residence in Norfolk in 1454 (*Paston Letters*, I, pp. lxxxix, cxii) but the family was an old one in the county (*D. N. B.*, *ibid.*).

lands in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.¹ Altho Sir John was first of all a soldier and man of business, he is known to have had an interest in books and learning.

From a note in ms. Harleian 2266 we know that his step-son, Stephen Scrope, translated for him in 1450 the *Dicta et opiniones diversorum philosophorum*:

This Boke byfore wretyn is callid in French Letris, Ditz de Philisophius and in Englyshe, for to sey, the Doctryne & the Wyse-dome of the Wyse, Auncyent Philosophers, as Arystotle, Plato, Socrates, Tholome, & suche oþer. Translated out of Laten into Frenche to Kyng Charles the Syxte ofe Fraunce by Wyllyam Tyn-gnovyle Knyght, late Provest of the Cyte ofe Parys: and sythe now late translatyd out of Frenshe tung in to Englyshe, the yere of our Lorde 1450. to John Fostalfe Knyghte for his Contemplacion & Solas by Stevyn Scrope Squyer, Sonne in Law to the seide Fostalle. Deo Gracias.²

And from Caxton's prolog to *Tully of Old Age* we know that Fastolf caused a translation to be made of Cicero's *De Senectute*:

hEre begynneth the prohemye vpon the reducyng, both out of latyn as of frensshe in to our englyssh tongue, of the polytyque book named Tullius de Senectute . . . whiche book was translated and thystoryes openly declared by the ordenaunce & desyre of the noble Auncyent knyght Syr Johan Fastolf of the countee of Norfolk banerette.³

It has been conjectured by some scholars that this translation was made by William Worcester,⁴ Fastolf's secretary, for we know that in 1473 Worcester presented to Bishop Waynefleete of Winchester an English version which he had made of this work.⁵ Whether or not this trans-

¹ *Paston Letters*, I, pp. lxxxvii, 296, 297, 461; II, p. viii, etc.

² *Cat. Lib. MSS. Harl.*, II, p. 633.

³ Blades, *Caxton*, L. 1861, I, p. 159.

⁴ Sidney Lee, in *D. N. B.* XVIII, p. 238; Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, I, p. cxiv.

⁵ See *Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre*, ed.

lation had originally been made for Fastolf, we know of other literary commissions that Worcester performed for his master. Of his *Acta domini Johannis Falstoph*, which appears to be lost, we have very little information, but there is a strong probability that it was written at Fastolf's command.¹ There is manuscript evidence, however, that Worcester's *Verificatio omnium stellarum fixarum pro anno 1440* was written under the patronage of Fastolf.² It cannot be said that the knight was a generous patron, for his treatment of both Worcester and Scrope was decidedly shabby,³ but this was merely a specific symptom of the man's general character, which was hard and grasping. The notable point is that he cared for literature at all, not that he showed a disinclination to pay a good price for the work done for him.

Ingham, about nine miles from Caister,⁴ was the seat

J. Nasmith, Cantab., 1778, p. 368: "1473. die 10 augusti presentavi W. episcopo Wyntoniensi apud Asher librum Tullii de Senectute per me translatum in anglicis, sed nullum regardum recepi de episcopo."

¹ Tanner had apparently seen a MS. of this work; see *Bibliotheca*, p. 115. It appears also to be referred to in *Paston Letters*, I, p. 545.

² I give the title according to Tanner's version of it. Gairdner (*Paston Letters*, I, p. cxiv) gives it, from MS. Laud. B. 23, as "Stellae versificateae pro anno 1440 ad instantiam J. Fastolfe militis." For lists of Worcester's numerous other works see Tanner, and *D. N. B.*, LXII, pp. 442, 443. His *De ordinibus religiosorum tam nomine quam habitu compilatus de diversis cronicis in civitate Lond.* was written for a Norfolk patron, Nicholas Ancrage, prior of St. Leonard's, a Benedictine cell close to Norwich, in 1465. Valuable information about Worcester is contained in an essay, *The Note Books of William Worcester*, in F. A. Gasquet's *Old English Bible*.

³ *Paston Letters*, I, pp. cxiii-vi, 300, 301. There is some reason for believing that Fastolf had some connection with the *Book of Noblesse*, presented to Edward IV in 1475, some years after Fastolf's death. For the evidence see J. G. Nichols's introduction to that text in the volume edited by him for the Roxburghe Club.

⁴ My designations of distance thruout this paper will always refer to air lines, and not to the actual distances by road, and are only

of Sir Miles Stapleton, one of the leading men of Norfolk at the period with which we are dealing, and well known to Fastolf and the Pastons. He, as well as John Paston, appears to have been Fastolf's "cousin," tho I do not know the precise nature of their relationship.¹ His testament, made in 1444, named Sir John as executor.² He was often on the commission of the peace for Norfolk and Suffolk, in company with Sir John Fastolf or John Paston,³ and is frequently mentioned in the Paston letters in connection with the affairs of that family.⁴

Sir Miles Stapleton (d. 1466) plays a part in East Anglian literary history as the patron of John Metham, apparently a resident of Norwich, who is styled "scolere of Cambryg," and "sympyl scoler of philosophie," the author of several pseudo-scientific treatises on such subjects as palmistry and physiognomy,⁵ but chiefly of the romance of *Amoryus and Cleopes*, which he wrote in 1448

rough approximations of the air lines. They will be useful, however, as relative indications of the distances between places referred to, which are marked on the map facing the first page of this article. This map, which is only a tracing of a tracing from Stanford's *London Atlas*, makes no pretensions to accuracy and is furnished merely as a help in locating the places referred to.

¹ *Paston Letters*, I, p. 393, abstract of a letter of Fastolf, calling Stapleton "my cousin."

² Blomefield's *Norfolk*, ix, p. 321.

³ Sir Miles Stapleton appears with Sir John Fastolf in the commissions of 1445, 1447, 1448, 1450, 1452. He appears in the commission of 1447 with John Paston. See *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1441-6, p. 474; 1446-52, p. 592.

⁴ *Paston Letters*, I, pp. 39, 141, 120, 152, 156, etc. In 1450 and thereabouts Paston was apparently on very good terms with Stapleton, but later their relations became somewhat strained, for in 1461 Paston calls him "that knavyssh knyght, Sir Miles Stapilton" (*Paston Letters*, II, p. 28, letter to Margaret Paston).

⁵ For the list of his works see Furnivall, *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, re-edited 1903, E. E. T. S., p. 308.

or 1449 for Sir Miles and Lady Catherine Stapleton, to which he gave the following heading:

Thys ys the story off a knyght, howe he dyd many wurthy dedys be the help off a lady, the qwyche taught hym to ouercome a merulus dragon, the qwyche was a C ffote longe. And this knyght was clepyd Amoryus, & the lady, Cleopes.¹

The romance itself has not yet been printed, but Dr. Furnivall was good enough to give us a summary of it, with the prolog and epilog, which throw no little light on Metham and his little public. After an invocation, a brief statement of the history of the parents of his hero and heroine, and a stanza of apology, Metham tells us what led him to write the story:

But cause qwy that I this boke endyght,
Is, that noqwere in Latyne ner Englysch I coude yt aspye;
But in Grwe y had yt wrytyn, lynnyd bryght
With lettrys off gold, that gay were wrowght to the ye,
That causyd me to meruel that thei so gloryusly
Was adornyd: & oftyn I enqwryd of letteryd clerkys,
Qwat yt myght be, that poyntyd was with so merwulus werkys.

But alle thei seyde that yt was, be supposyng,
Grwe; but qwat yt ment, thei nyst ryght nojt at alle.
And as yt ffortunyde, ther come rydyng
To Norwyche, a Greke, to home I schewyd in specyall
Thys fforsayd boke; & he, iche word, bothe gret & smal,
In Latyne yt expungyd; & thus, be hys infformacion,
I had the trwe grownd & very conclusyon.²

Metham concludes his romance, says Dr. Furnivall, with praise of his patrons, Sir Miles Stapleton and Lady Catherine, and ends with the following epilog:

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.

And yff I the trwthe schuld here wryght,
 As gret a style I schuld make in euery dregre,
 As Chauncerys, off qwene Eleyne or Cresseyd, doht endyht,
 Or off Polyxchene, Grysylde, or Penelope.
 As beuteuus, as womanly, as pacyent, as thei were wunt to be,
 Thys lady was, qwan I endytyd this story,
 Floryschyng, the seyn & twenty yere off the sext kyng Henry.¹

Go now, lytyl boke, & with alle obeychaun,
 Enterly me comende to my lord and mastyr eke,
 And to hys ryght reuerend lady, with alle plesaun,
 Enformyng them, how ffeythfully I hem beseke
 Off supportacion of the rude endytyng owte of Greke;
 For alle this wrytyng ys sayd vndyr correccion,
 Bothe off thi rymyng, & eke off thi translacion.

For thei that greyheryd be, afftyr ffolkys estymacion,
 Nedys must more cunne, be kindly nature,
 In yche syens qwere-in thei haue ther operacion,—
 Sythyn that crafft comyth be contynwaun, [*i. e. continuance*] in-to
 euery creature,—

Than he that late begynnyth, as be demonstracion
 My mastyr Chauncerys, I mene, that longe dyd endure
 In practyk off rymyng; qwerfore proffoundly
 With many prouerby, hys bokys be rymyd naturelly.²

Eke Ion Lydgate, sumtyme monke off Byry,
 His bokys endytyd with termys off retoryk
 And hallff chongyd Latyne, with conseytys off poetry
 And craffy Imagynacionys off ym[a]lgys ffantastyk,
 [. no gap in the ms.]
 But eke hys qwyght [*i. e. wit*] her schewyd, & hys late werk,
 How that hys contynwaun, made hym both a poyet & a clerk.

¹ 27 Henry VI is from 1 Sept., 1448 to 31 Aug., 1449. Metham's language might suggest that Lady Catherine died between the completion of the romance and the writing of the epilog, but this was not the case, for she was still living on 2 Jan., 7 Edward IV, having married, after the death of Sir Miles, Sir Richard Harcourt of Ellendale, Staffordshire (Blomefield's *Norfolk*, ix, p. 321).

² Metham's apology might indicate either that he wrote this romance in his youth, and had not acquired that skill which "continuance" gives, or that he began to rime when he was somewhat old. His treatise on palmistry, immediately preceding the *Amoryus and Cleopes*, bears a note to the effect that it was "translatyd" into English "the xxv. wyntyre off hys age."

But nowe thei bothe be pasyd; & affter schal I.
 Qwef-ffor I make this schort orysun:
 O welle of mercy, Iesu,—that I, be ffreelness & ffoly
 Hauē thee offendyd in dede or in ony Imagynaciō,—
 Fully off fforyeffnes I thee beseche, with my herty, hole emmocion,
 Purposyng to amende alle that I haue done amys;
 To me, Iesu, now thi mercy, fful necessary ys.

And thei that my sympyl wrytyng schal rede,
 Off storyis off elde tyme, yff thei lyste, off ther godene,
 Qwere thei Ion Metham in boke, flynde, pray for hym to spede
 In vertuys; for he off rymyng toke the besyne,
 To comferte them that schuld[e] falle in heuynes,
 For tyme on-ocupyd, qwan ffolk haue lytyl to do,
 On haly dayis to rede, me thynk yt [ys] best so.¹

From the familiar way in which Metham speaks of Lydgate, and from the early information he had of his death,² it seems probable that he was personally acquainted with him. It is rather likely that Sir Miles Stapleton also knew Lydgate; at any rate, in the year Sir Miles was sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk he paid to Lydgate the

¹ Furnivall, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-308. I can give no other information about Metham than that furnished by the Quaritch MS. That he was a scholar of Cambridge, probably a resident of Norwich, and flourished c. 1449 is all we have. Dr. Furnivall says (p. 308) that, according to the statement of the Registry, the Cambridge University records do not mention him. Nor is he mentioned in such Norwich records as I have examined, nor in the Norfolk Feet of Fines. The family appears to have been originally of Yorkshire, with branches in Lincolnshire, to judge from the authorities referred to in G. W. Marshall's *Genealogist's Guide*. It is possible that John Metham is to be connected with Thomas Metham who married Elizabeth, the sister of Thomas Stapleton of Kentmere, etc., of the Yorkshire Stapletons, from whom the Norfolk branch of the family sprang. Thomas Stapleton died in 1373; Thomas Metham in 1402-3, *aetat.* 24, leaving male descendants who held the barony for several hundred years. See for this the *Complete Peerage*, VII, p. 242, note b.

² See letters by Dr. MacCracken and the present writer in the *Nation*, Feb. 29 and March 14, 1912.

£ 3 16 s. 8 d. due on his annuity, which was payable out of the issues of those two counties.¹

Sir Miles may also have made the acquaintance of Lydgate thru the poet's connection with the De la Poles, for Lady Catherine Stapleton was the daughter of Thomas de la Pole, uncle of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk (1396-1450).² This great nobleman, head of one of the richest and most powerful families in England, was closely associated with the Norfolk families with which we have been dealing. Stapleton made him supervisor of the testament of which Fastolf was executor.³ He served frequently on the commission of the peace with William Paston, John Paston, Sir John Fastolf, and Sir Miles Stapleton.⁴ Two of his Norfolk estates, Costesey and Causton, lay within twenty miles of Paston. He was not

¹ R. Steele, Lydgate and Burgh's *Secrees of Old Philosophers*, E. E. T. S., p. xxvi, Doc. vi.

² According to the monumental inscription given by Blomefield: ". et [orate] p. a'i'ab, D'ne Catherine, filie D'ni Thomas Poole, fil. Michaelis nup. comitis Suff . ." (*Norfolk*, ix, p. 324). This Thomas must have been the second son of the first Earl of Suffolk, for the third earl died without male issue, and the Thomas who was son of the second earl was a priest. For these details see *D. N. B.*, XLVI, pp. 33, 34. For a good genealogy of the Stapletons see *Norfolk Archaeology*, vols. VIII, XVI. By Sir Miles's marriage to Elizabeth Felbrigg (his first wife) and the marriage of his daughter to Sir William Calthorp, he was connected with two of the foremost families of Norfolk.

³ See Blomefield, as cited in note 2, p. 197 above.

⁴ He served with William Paston on the commissions of 1430, 1431, 1434, 1436, 2 Jan. 1437, and 14 March 1437. He served with William Paston and Sir John Fastolf on the commissions of May 1437, 1438, 1441, and 1444. He served with Sir Miles Stapleton on the commissions of 1438, and 1439, and 1440, and with Sir Miles Stapleton and Sir John Fastolf on those of 1445 and 1448. He served on the commission of 1447 with Sir John Fastolf, Sir Miles Stapleton, and John Paston. See *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1429-36, p. 621; 1436-41, pp. 586, 590, 591; 1441-6, p. 474; 1446-52, p. 592.

only a great person at court and a leading counsellor of the King, but one of the great magnates of East Anglia, for his holdings of land in Norfolk and Suffolk, especially the latter, greatly outnumbered those in all the other counties together.¹

The Duke of Suffolk was a practitioner, as well as a patron, of the art of letters. The precise amount of his work that has come down to us is uncertain, but we may be sure at least of his authorship of the six poems in French that are ascribed to him by Shirley.² It is very improbable, however, that he should have written only French verse, for his prose remains, scanty as they are, prove him to have been, in Dr. MacCracken's words, "a master of English." Considerable probability has recently been shown by Dr. MacCracken for believing Suffolk to have been the author of the English poems preserved in the manuscripts of his friend Charles d'Orléans and of a group of English poems in Fairfax ms. 16.³

¹ For a list of the estates of which William de la Pole died seized, see Dugdale, *Baronage of England*, II, p. 189. In Suffolk there were about 35 manors, etc., in Norfolk 5, and in all the other counties about 21. The estates in Suffolk are particularly frequent in the district immediately east of Bury, in the neighbourhood of Stow Market, Hadleigh, and Eye. Others are near Harleston, Halesworth, Saxmundham, Ipswich, and Lowestoft. In Norfolk, Causton is 4 m. WSW of Aylsham, Costesey 4½ m. NW of Norwich, and Stocton 3½ m. NW of Beccles. William de la Pole was born at Cotton, about 13 miles E. by N. from Bury, and was buried at Wingfield, near the Norfolk line (*D. N. B.*, XLVI, pp. 50, 55).

² These, with the English poems suspected to be the work of Suffolk, are printed by Dr. MacCracken in his article, *An English Friend of Charles of Orléans*, in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XXVI, pp. 142 ff. Dr. MacCracken's interest in East Anglian patrons of letters began at an earlier date than my own, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge the help he has afforded me in my study of the subject.

³ See preceding note. William de la Pole is sometimes spoken

William de la Pole's interest in Lydgate is attested by the following notation affixed to that poet's petition for new letters patent of his annuity of £ 7 13 s. 4 d., in 1441:

Rex apud Westmonasterium xiiij^o die Novembris anno xx. concessit presentem billam ut petitur, et mandavit Custodi privati sigilli sui facere garrantum Cancellario Anglie, ut ipse desuper fieri faciat litteras patentes secundum tenorem copie presentibus annexe, *presentibus Domino Suffolcie qui billam prosecutus est* ac me

Adam Moleyns.¹

It is further shown by his possession of Lydgate's *Story of Thebes*, the Arundel ms. of this work bearing the Duke's arms.² We have no evidence of Suffolk's connection with the composition of any particular work of Lydgate's, but we know that the poem often called *Virtues of the Mass* was written for the Countess of Suffolk. The ms. note containing this piece of information is not dated and does not mention the countess's Christian name, saying merely:

Interpretatio missae in lingua materna secundum Johannem Lidgate, monachum de Buria, ad rogatum dominae comitissae de Suthfolchia.³

This lady is generally taken to be the wife of William

of as a patron of Reginald Pecock. He was certainly his ecclesiastical patron (*Repressor*, ed. Babington, Rolls Series, I, xxxii) but I have found no evidence of his being his literary patron.

¹ Steele, *Secrees of Old Philosophers*, E. E. T. S., p. xxvii, Doc. VII. Adam Moleyns, afterwards bishop of Chichester, is not the person Lydgate refers to in the *Departing of Thomas Chaucer*, but a considerably younger man, for no notice occurs of him before 1436 (*D. N. B.*, xxxviii, p. 131). The italics are mine.

² MacCracken, *Studies in the Life and Writings of John Lydgate*, Harvard, 1907, (unpublished) dissertation.

³ *Cat. Cod. MSS. in Coll. Aulisque Oxon.*, Pars II, S. Johannis Baptistae, p. 16.

de la Pole, who was the daughter of Thomas Chaucer, and we have no evidence inconsistent with the identification, but it is possible that she was the wife of the second or of the third Earl of Suffolk, for both countesses were alive at a date well within Lydgate's literary career.¹ In any case, however, the ms. note is good evidence that Lydgate enjoyed the patronage as well as the friendship of the De la Poles.

Lydgate's superior from 1429 to 1446 was William Curteis. As abbot of the great monastery of St. Edmund's, Curteis was one of the greatest lords of Norfolk and Suffolk, and therefore well known to the gentry of those counties. He was appointed in 1440 and 1442 with the Earl of Suffolk, Sir Miles Stapleton, and others to treat with divers spiritual and secular persons touching a loan to the King.² Dr. MacCracken has pointed out the fact that William Paston became a brother of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's in 1429.³

In the winter of 1433-4 occurred one of the most notable events of William Curteis's term as abbot:

In the twelfth year of his age and reign, on the feast of All Saints, A. D. 1433, King Henry the Sixth determined to celebrate the approaching Christmas in the monastery of St. Edmund; and there to reside till the St. George's day following. When the intention of the royal visit was made known to William Curteis, the Abbot, then at his manor of Elmswell, highly gratified with this distinguished honour, he hastened with all possible dispatch to Bury, that arrangements might immediately be made for entertaining his royal guest in an appropriate manner, becoming the splendor and dignity of his elevated station.⁴

¹ Both died later than 1415 (*Complete Peerage*, VII, pp. 304, 305).

² *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1436-41, p. 504; 1441-6, p. 62. Curteis became abbot of St. Edmund's about Feb. 18, 1429 (*ibid.*, 1422-9, p. 528).

³ *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XXIII, p. 134.

⁴ Richard Yates, *History and Antiquities of the Abbey of St. Edmund's Bury*, pp. 150, 151.

In connection with this visit Curteis commissioned Lydgate to write for the King the legend of *St. Edmund and St. Fremund*. The presentation copy of this work, Harleian ms. 2278, is one of the finest of fifteenth-century manuscripts. "Besides the decoration of illuminated initials, and one hundred and twenty pictures of various sizes, representing the incidents related in the poetry, executed with the most delicate pencil, and exhibiting the habits, weapons, architecture, utensils, and many other curious particulars belonging to the age of the ingenious illuminator, there are two exquisite portraits of the King, one of William Curteis, Abbot of Bury, and one of the poet Lydgate kneeling at St. Edward's shrine," says Warton.¹ The poet himself tells us how he wrote the legend at the command of his superior:

Whan sixte Herry in his estat roial
 With his sceptre of Yngland and of France,
 Heeld at Bury the feste pryncipal
 Of Cristemesse with ful gret habundance,
 And aftir that list to haue plesance—
 As his consail gan for hym prouide—
 There in his place til hesterne forto abide:

.
 Which at departyng in Bury from his place
 Lyst of his noblesse and magnanymite
 And of his owyn special grace,
 Meuyd in hym-silf of his benignyte,
 Of ther chapitle a brother forto be,
 Yeuyng his chapleyns occasion and matier
 Ay to remembre on him in ther praier:

.
 In this mater there is no more to seyn,
 Sauf: to the kyng forto do plesaunce,
 Thabbot William, his humble chapeleyn,
 Gaf me in charge to do myn attendaunce

¹ *History of English Poetry*, ed. Hazlitt, III, p. 56.

The noble story to translate in substaunce
 Out of the latyn aftir my kunnyng,
 He in ful purpos to yeue it to the kyng.
 And thowh I was bareyn of elloquence,
 Hauyng no practik fresshley to endite,
 I took upon me vndir obedience
 Aftir his biddyng me lowly forto quite.¹

The legend of St. Edmund is not the only work Lydgate wrote for William Curteis "under obedience," in the strict sense of the word.² All of Lydgate's work from 1429 to 1446 must, of course, have had the sanction of this abbot, but at least one other piece of verse was written at his express command, namely, a version of the *De Profundis* in ms. Harleian 2255, of which the concluding stanza says that he was:

¹ Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, St. Edmund und Fremund, pp. 379 ff.

² A parallel case of a religious undertaking literary work at the command of his superior occurs in the case of the prose legends of saints contained in MS. Douce 114, printed in *Anglia*, vol. VIII. In the "shorte Apologetik of þis englysshe compyloure" the author asks forgiveness from his readers for the faults of his writing, that they may be

raþer arettyng his lewdnesse to symple ignorauns and obedyens þanne to pryde or presumpeyone. For wite alle men þat he þe whiche drewe þis englyssche, so as (it) is, oute of latyne, knowyng his owne sympilnesse and vnkonyng, durst not haue presumed to take sicke a labour on hand, but if his souereyn hadde bidden hym, whome he myghte not ageyne-seye. Neuerþeles a souereyns prayer may be clepyd a comaundemente, as on seiþ þus: *Est orare patrum species violenta iubendi, Et quasi nudato supplicat ense potens*—þat is to mene: a priours preyyng til obeyand monke is a bidinge. *Lingue, non ferri, Prior vtitur ense potenti. Non contradixi, sum quia verna sui* (pp. 195, 196).

The Proemium to the *Eulogium Historiarum* (ed. Haydon, Rolls Series, I, pp. 1-5) informs us that that work also was undertaken at the command of the author's superior.

Late charchyd in myn oold dayes
By William Curtys which gafe Comaundement
That I shuld graunte myn assent
Ofe that Kynrede make a Memorial
With *De Profundis* whan so that it be sent,
At his Chirche to hang it on the Wal.¹

This manuscript, which contains about forty-five pieces of religious verse (chiefly Lydgate's), is marked with the arms of the Abbey and of Curteis, and appears to have been made for him.²

SAMUEL MOORE.

¹ *Cat. Harl. MSS.*, II, p. 592.

² MacCracken, *Studies*, etc.